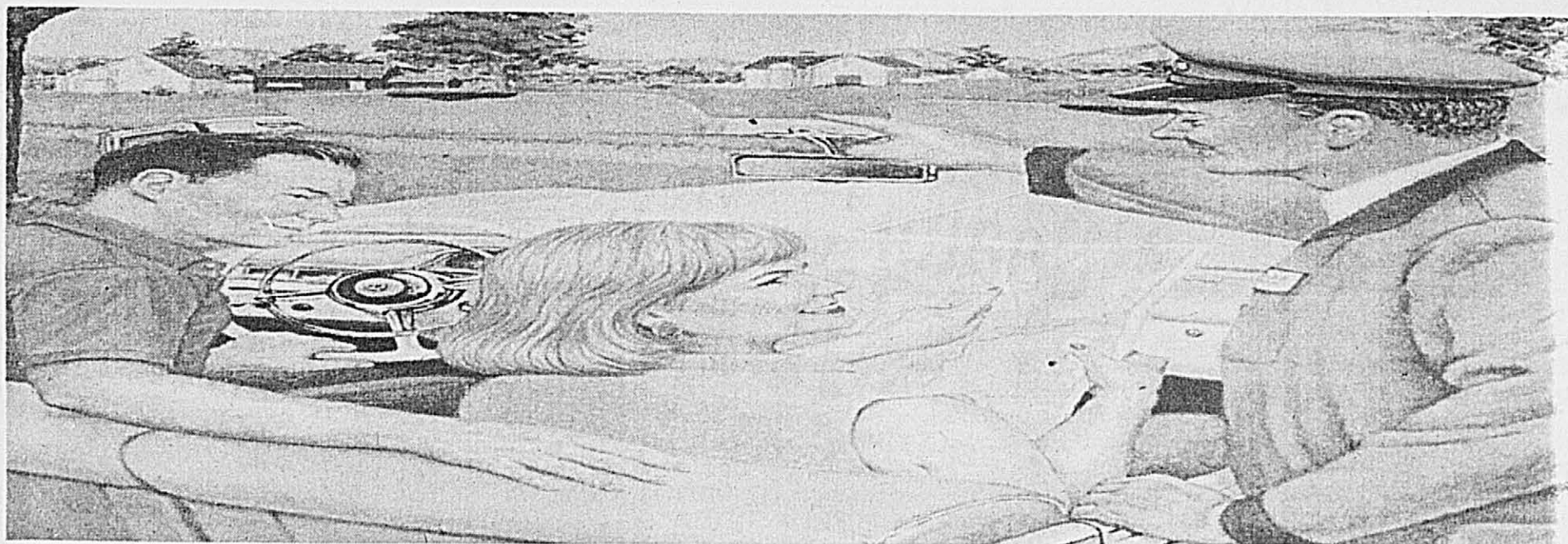




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The McGill Daily

volume 86 • number 5

September 12 — 18, 1996

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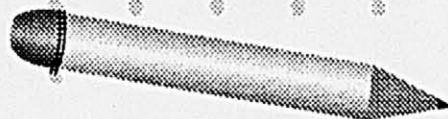
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Living in a police state

Montréal police attack youth — again

by Andrea Mason

Standing across the street in the early morning of September 5, four students watched as Montréal police attacked a young man outside the Bifteque bar on St. Laurent boulevard.

Angered by the circumstances under which the young man, Marco, was beaten, Olaf de Winter, Alice Blondel, Richard Lewis and Talya Reuben organised a demonstration in front of Station 33 on Ontario Street on September 8.

"[This demonstration] shows

solidarity with the victims. It shows police certain people are not afraid and they can't do this to one person and expect no one else is going to react," declared de Winter.

About 40 protesters, the majority of whom were street youth, showed up to denounce the police for their increasingly heavy handed approach to dealing with homeless youth in the city.

The incident was the latest in a series of altercations between police and street youth in Montréal. Ever since a riot by street youth erupted on St. Laurent Blvd. last June, police have displayed a growing intolerance toward them.

"They [the Montréal police] have become morality police," declared Blondel. "They see something they don't like and regardless of the law they act on it."

On the morning of September 5, police arrived at the Bifteque after receiving a call from the owner who complained about a patron. After a confrontation with the man, the officers began to undo the leash of a dog tied to a nearby lamp-post, believing the dog belonged to the patron.

According to Lewis, Marco, the owner of the dog, rushed out of the bar demanding that the animal be left alone. "Before he made any aggressive move towards the officers, they ran over and started punching him.

When he resisted and wouldn't go down, they sprayed mace in his eyes," described Lewis of the events which followed.

By the end of the confrontation, 14 additional police cars had arrived and officers were using billy clubs, mace and pepper spray to keep back bystanders.

According to Lewis, as many as five officers dragged Marco around the corner and continued to attack him. He was maced so heavily that one officer began to choke and had to move away.

Equally disturbing for the demonstration organisers is that none of the police involved in the incident were wearing their badges at the time. When a bystander questioned one of the officers on this point he replied that he had forgotten it at home, said Lewis.

"It's a form of terrorism," declared de Winter.

"I was scared," said Lewis, adding that "for 40 minutes we were living in a police state."

According to Lewis, one policeperson declared "I am the law," as he arrived at the Bifteque on September 5.

"We want them to know that, no, they're not the law," commented Lewis.

All four acknowledge that what happened was far from being an isolated incident.

"It's not just what happened on September 5. It's a long, ongoing battle. It didn't start yes-

terday and it won't stop tomorrow," de Winter.

No one knows this better than Shaun Nelson, one of the young demonstrators. By his own admission, Nelson has more tickets than anyone else in Montréal, including a charge of assaulting a police officer as a result of a confrontation between police and youths on August 19.

"It was seven p.m. and I was sleeping in Berri Square when a

in court on charges of assault.

Nelson partly blames the growing violence against street youth in Montréal on Mayor Pierre Bourque. He says the Mayor is concentrating on making the city attractive to tourists and so targeting street youth who detract from this image.

But that doesn't seem to be deterring Blondel, de Winter, Lewis and Reuben. Besides the demonstration, they are calling for the immediate suspension



SHAUN NELSON SPEAKS TO A SEEMINGLY DISINTERESTED POLICE OFFICER FROM STATION 33.

cop came and tried to wake me up," explained Nelson. "When I woke up I jumped and hit him with my elbow." The officer's wake up call included pulling Nelson up by his hair — yet it is Nelson who will be appearing

without pay of all the officers involved in the Bifteque case. They are also demanding an inquiry into why such violence was used in the incident and have lodged a formal complaint with the police ethics committee.

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Editorial Offices:

3480 McTavish St., Montréal, Qc.,
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Business & Advertising Office:

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editorial: (514) 398-6784

business/advertising: (514) 398-6790

fax: (514) 398-8318

business managers: Marian Schrier

assistant business managers:

Jo-Anne Pickel

advertising managers:

Boris Shedov, Letty Matteo

advertising layout & design:

Mark Brooker

cover by:

M. Engelbert Griffon

contributors:

Jonah Brucker Cohen, Derek Fung, M. Engelbert Griffon, Sarah Johnson, Jason Kleine, Julien Lapointe, Jay McCoy, Ira Nayman, Helen Polychronatos, Netami Stuart.

Co-ordinating Editor: Idella Sturino

Co-ordinating News Editor: Anup Grewal

Co-ordinating Culture Editor: Kevin Siu

News Editors: Andrea Mason, Zachary Schwartz

Culture Editors: Meredith Cohen, Mike Cullen

Features Editor: Sonia Verma

National Affairs Editor: Robin Perelle

Layout & Design Co-ordinators: Samantha

Murphy,

Daily Français: Marc-Antoine Godin,

Emmanuelle Latraverse

Photo Editors: David Ryther, Lucy Atkinson

Office Co-ordinator: Andrea Cooke

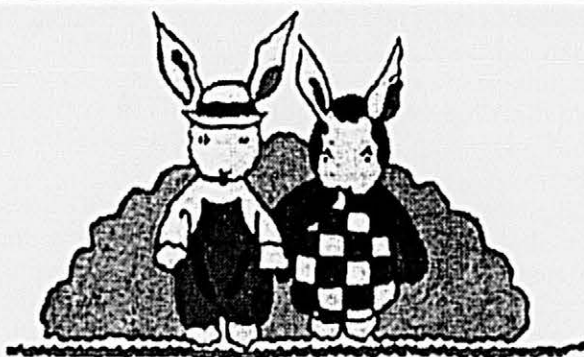
Project Co-ordinator:

Information Editor:

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A THINLY VEILED WILDERNESS

Play captures the line between art and politics

The Night A Tiger Was Captured plays tonight on lower campus

by Helen Polychronatos

Tian Han, author of *The Night A Tiger Was Captured*, was an important contributor to the development of *Tan Hua*, or spoken drama. This theatrical form was created during China's Cultural Revolution in the 1960s to replace Beijing Opera, a tradition which the new regime regarded as a vestige of feudalism. In the place of singing and erudite abstractions, *Tan Hua* theatre featured speech and subject matter relevant to 'the masses'.

Despite his contributions, Tian's negative depictions of peasants put him at odds with the agenda of the Cultural revolution, which idealised peasant life. In *The Night A Tiger Was Captured*, for instance, he presents a group of villagers torn apart by greed.

According to Shawn Steil, producer/director of the play, Tian died a political prisoner in the 1960s.

In light of Tian's demise, it seems perfectly logical that Amnesty International should receive the donations collected during the play's outdoor performances. I was, however, a little reticent to accept wholeheartedly this alliance between the venerated spectre of an artist persecuted by communism, and an organisation designed to fight human rights violations.

Such a juxtaposition reiterates an old dichotomised view of the world, imposing a deep division between capitalist and communist nations, thus creating a humanitarian west and a tyrannical east.

Thus, my trip to John Abbott College, the sight of Saturday's production, was filled with apprehensions that the play would be full of humanitarian clichés, offering outdated solutions to current problems.

However, when I arrived and had a chance to speak to Steil, I decided to loosen up a little, and reserve my critical impulses for later — after, that is, I had actually seen the play.

It occurred to me then that collecting money for Amnesty during a play whose author had been persecuted for his art was indeed fitting, and did not necessarily constitute a definitive statement as to what Amnesty's mandate ought to be.

So, disentangling politics from art, I watched *The Night A Tiger Was Captured* for its exemplification of *Tan Hua* — a genre which, incidentally, is an exemplification of the entanglement

of politics and art.

Anecdotes recounting marriage arrangements and hunting expeditions constitute much of the play's dialogue. Thus, both in form and in subject matter, the spoken aspect of the play complied to communist demands: It addresses in a simple manner daily issues, which the leaders of the Cultural Revolution deemed suitable for peasant and proletarian ears.

play's domestic setting is impossible without the tiger and its wilderness.

The use of candles and lanterns to delineate the home's border illustrates the precarious line separating the wilderness from the home. At the same time, it is easy to imagine the flimsy candle flames flaring up, ravaging the space they are intended to protect. Like the tiger, fire



These issues — marriage and hunting — call to mind the two spheres of domesticity and public life.

The family's household, where most of the action takes place, is aptly represented by a circle of lanterns, candles, and incense sticks that enclose the family, separating and thus protecting them from the dangers (embodied in the vicious tigers) roaming in the bush.

During the first scenes of the play, the circle of flickering fires seems almost invincible, as if no intruder could ever cross its sacred line to disturb the family's domestic life.

But the father's last hunting trip ends in tragedy, after which the serenity of domestic life breaks out in violence, and family members turn against one another. At this point, there is no more separation between an ordered and 'civilised' domestic inside, and a wild 'outside'. It is the tigers' hides, after all, that provide for the family's livelihood.

Though the father hunts and therefore domesticates, to a certain extent, the wilderness, the

here becomes the domesticated wilderness threatening to turn wild again.

This play made me question several things such as, what does it mean to 'evolve' and to be 'civilised'? Whenever a nation is said to advance, to become in some way more 'civilised', what is the 'wilderness' it has left behind? What are the raw materials a civilisation must use to build itself?

These inquiries bring me back to Amnesty International, and the question of precisely which human rights violations it ought to condemn. Many nations, regardless of ideology, are perpetrators of human rights violations. The effort that Canadian Border officials have made to keep certain kinds of literature out of the country, for example, is not a far cry from the Cultural Revolution's laws of censorship. Recent allegations of abusive military behaviour in Somalia and Bosnia, leave little to be desired for any nation that would call itself 'humanitarian' or 'civilised'. Even in the '90s, 'civilisation' often wields a thin veil.



1. Unrest quelled in South Korea

South Korea's Kim Young Sam regime hopes that the recent trial and conviction of two military dictators and various corporate executives will quell the country's political unrest.

General Chun Doo Hwan, who killed an estimated 2,000 demonstrators in the city of Kwangju in 1980 following a 1979 rise to power, received a death sentence.

Co-defendant and former South Korean President General Rae Tae Woo, who rose to prominence in 1988 with the aid of the American CIA, received a sentence of 22 and a half years. These high profile trials are intended to convince the world that the days of repression are over in South Korea. Yet he government ordered police raids on Yonsei University in Seoul during the trials. Using tear gas, students were beaten and some

5,000 were arrested while trying to march over the border to demand reunification with socialist North Korea.

The source of political unrest dates back to the U.S. occupation of Korea following the defeat of Japan in World War II. The ensuing conflict that erupted in 1950 between North Korea and the U.S. Pentagon lasted three years.

The Korean war left millions of families separated and a permanent stationing of 40,000 U.S. troops on Korean soil with no peace treaty in place.

Since then, reunification efforts have been evident on both sides, but efforts such as those spearheaded by students have been met with brutal repression in South Korea.

Source: Workers World Newspaper - nyt@blythe.org

2. Lead pollution threaten Filipino villages

The recycling of lead from car batteries by companies such as Philippine Recyclers Inc. (PRI) are allegedly poisoning the country's land and its people. Companies like PRI import car batteries from countries such as Australia, Canada, Britain and the United States in order to remold them into plates for new car batteries.

Greenpeace says that el-

evated lead levels detected in studies are a direct consequence of lack of safeguards, dumping of hazardous waste and harmful emissions by PRI.

Harmful sulfuric dust on crops, respiratory ailments among children, constant sore throats and burning sensations in the eyes have all ready been reported by local residents.

Other possible complications from lead exposure are anemia, nerve damage and male infertility — a cause for worry considering the country imported 24,796 tons of lead acid batteries in 1995 alone. These figures for imports have doubled compared to the previous year adding up to a total of 76,256 tons since 1991.

Greenpeace cites cheap labour and poor enforcement of environmental laws as the causes for the influx of lead smelting in Asian countries.

A Greenpeace study also points out dangers to human health in communities near lead smelters in Latin American and other Asian countries such as Indone-

sia, Taiwan and Thailand.

Source: Interpress Third World News Agencyrich@pencil.math.missouri.edu

3. Cuba: Biotech meets Helms-Burton

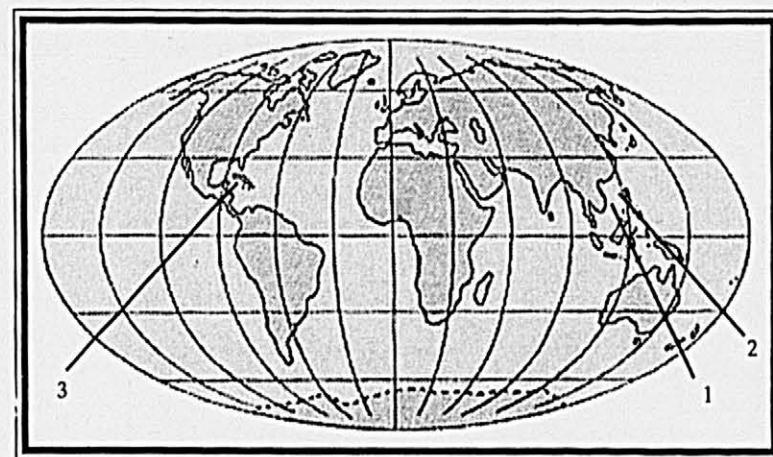
Cuba's booming biotechnology sector is being restrained by the recent U.S. "Helms-Burton" law.

The Cuban biotechnology sector, closely linked to the country's pharmaceutical industry, is bringing Cuba more than \$100 million in foreign currency each year. A pet project of Cuban president Fidel Castro, the biotech industry was started in 1980. Cuba is now one of the world's largest producers of a recombinant vaccine against

hepatitis B, and the only producer of a vaccine against the meningitis B bacterium. Vaccines like the one for hepatitis B are supplied for free to Cuban children, and countries like India buy it for as little as \$2 a shot.

Cuba also profits from its recombinant research, and major foreign pharmaceutical firms are interested in joint ventures. But with the U.S. — which represents 50% of the global market for pharmaceuticals — putting pressure on foreign governments to comply with their trade embargo against Cuba, such firms are being deterred.

Source: Weekly News Update on the Americas, nicanet@nyxfer.blythe.org



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THE MYSTIQUE OF THE ORIGINAL IN INFINITE REPRODUCTION

Magritte and the culture of appropriation

by Ira Nayman

When I was growing up, I used to dream of a cityscape upon which identical businessmen in bowler hats rained. Fantasies of a shattered pane of glass whose shards, despite littering the floor, retained the image of the city outside the window filled my head. In my imagination, giant rocks floated next to clouds in the sky, dwarfing the small village below. As I grew older, I began to realize that these, and many other surreal images contained an implicit critique of the concept of representation in art; but my original, and still strongest attraction to them was in the way they combined whimsy and concrete imagery to create a dreamlike world that connected to my own subconscious world.

These images were not, of course, my creations. That credit belongs to Belgian painter René Magritte. I was familiar with many of his images from the reproductions I had seen in books on his work and at a World Wide Web site which contains over 300 digital reproductions of his paintings. So, when I found out that an exhibition of over 100 of his paintings, sculptures and films could be seen at the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts, I could not wait to go and see it.

It is becoming axiomatic that we live in an age of infinite reproduction; it would be a trivial exercise to take one of the digitized versions of a Magritte

apple in front of the face of one of his businessmen wielding a bowler hat, has been reproduced in books and magazine covers and movies; there is a form of cultural osmosis whereby we seem to absorb such images almost from the air.

The Magritte exhibition was a reminder of the limitations of reproduction. None of the print versions of his works which I have seen have captured the depth of his brush strokes, for

The Magritte exhibition was a reminder of the limitations of reproduction.

instance, the way light glints off the paint or the grandeur which size lends some of his larger works. Beyond this, there is a mystical rapport between artist and viewer which reproductions remove us from directly experiencing. As Penn Jillette, the talkative half of magical team Penn and Teller, told *Wired*, "you could buy a Picasso and change the colors. That's trivial. But you don't because you're buying a piece of Picasso's fucking soul." An original

add messages to a work of art which have nothing to do with the artist's original intentions. A reader of a magazine layout which appropriates a Magritte image, for instance, will always associate the content of the article with the image, even though they may only be connected in the mind of a desperate page designer with a looming deadline.

An exhibition of original works is a reminder that powerful art, when we have access to it, can survive the artistic uses to which it is put.

Another form of appropriation, the use of works of art in

Oldsmobile," a reference to Magritte's famous painting of a pipe with the caption "Ceci n'est pas une pipe." (The car manufacturer is a sponsor of the exhibition.) In the lobby of the Museum, before you actually arrive at the floor housing the Magritte exhibit, is the same car next to a large apple, a recurring image in his work.

As with most advertising, an association between the product (a car) and an emotion (the pleasure the

viewer gets from the work of art) is created specifically to sell the product. This is different from other forms of image appropriation because, whereas



Puttering with

Café art folie provides a

by Sarah Johnson

You can now atone for that early childhood sin of presenting a horrendous glob of clay to your parents/grandparents/ babysitter and calling it an ashtray.

Three Montréal women, Toni Schofield, Joan Gottman, and Liz King, have just opened a "paint-your-own-pottery" café in NDG. Anyone can just drop in, choose a piece of bisque pottery, plunk down a reasonable amount of money, order a cappuccino, paint a design on the aforementioned pottery, get it fired in the kiln, and pick it up a few days later and marvel at how age has really refined your artistic skills.

Café Art Folie offers customers over 100 different styles of dishware and decorative items to choose as their blank palates. A mug averages around eight dollars, while a tea pot will set you back about 20 dollars. To use the café's paints, reference books, stencils and guidance, add another eight dollars an hour for "studio time". Included in this fee, the café will fire and

glaze your piece for you.

While the owners hope the café will attract people of all ages, the cheery orange walls and kidney-bean shaped tables scream 'family space'. However, with open hours until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays, the café is ostensibly attempting to pull in a younger, hipper crowd.

Despite this, Café Art Folie's approach and decor is refreshing and unpretentious, and at the same time highlights that this is a functional space. If you just want a cup of coffee, go across the street to Second Cup. If you want to paint pottery, go to Café Art Folie.

And painting is all that one can do here. Laws concerning the meeting of flying clay and foodstuffs prohibits this from becoming a 'make your own pottery and then paint it' café. This is unfortunate as the best part of making pottery is actually shoving your hands into a pile of clay, throwing it

on a wheel and attempting to make it into something recognizable. However, you can still own something that you had some part in making.

If you do, you will be in interesting company. Apparently, this café concept originated in



THIS IS NOT AN ADVERTISEMENT

painting and send thousands (or, theoretically, millions) of copies by e-mail to people throughout the world. One of his most famous images, of an

work of art communicates on intimate emotional levels at which a reproduction can only hint.

Some forms of reproduction

DAILY PHOTO BY SARAH JOHNSON



N AN AGE OF

tion

they are often intellectual, and can be accepted or rejected on a rational basis by the viewer, here the connection is blatantly emotional, which is much more difficult to reject.

Of course, Magritte is only one example of this phenomenon. Music from the '60s is now used to link a wide variety of products with Baby Boomer nostalgia. Pastiche of old movies have long been used to relate products to the pleasure of going to the cinema. The Mona Lisa has been used to sell chocolate bars and Dali's paintings have been used to sell a real estate agency.

Aside from polluting our associations with the individual original works of art, the appropriation of fine art images in advertising threatens the whole enterprise of fine arts. If any image can be used as a selling tool in a consumer culture, it becomes impossible to believe in the integrity of the artist. Whatever ideas an artist may be trying to communicate in a work become secondary to the selling message, in most cases with the

complicity of the artist, making it difficult to believe that the artist was committed to the original purpose of the work. In addition, it is far more difficult for the fine arts to be able to critique consumer culture when, whether intentionally or not, they are largely becoming entwined within it.

The importance of the original is that it serves as a reminder that artists have impulses and ideas which go beyond the need to sell a product. Unfortunately, original works of art are becoming increasingly sequestered behind the walls of distant museums and the only way most people see images is in their appropriated form. This is why we must take the opportunity to view original works when it presents itself.

I intend to see the Magritte exhibition at least once more before it leaves Montréal on October 27. Even a few short hours with his paintings will inoculate me against the many future (mis)uses of others to which they may be exposed.

h pottery

little do-it-yourself

New York City and has really caught on well all over the United States, drawing such luminaries as Lee Iococa in to test his artistic skills. It is hard to picture that happening at this Monkland Ave. establishment, though — the café tends to re-

mind one of the arts and crafts room of a really nice summer camp that also happens to serve cappuccino and carrot cake.

But, if you want to do something different with a 20 dollar bill, or show someone that you really care by presenting them with something made with your sweat and tears, Café Art Folie does have the advantage of being one of the most accessible places in Montréal to attempt this. Or, if no one will accept yet another gift certificate from you this holiday season, hand-painted may be the way to go. No one has to know that you did not actually make the entire thing.

Café Art Folie is located at 5511 Monkland Ave. The café is closed Mondays, open 11-11 Tuesday through Thursday, 11-12 Friday and Saturday, and 11-6 Sundays.



CRUZ-IN' THROUGH THRESHOLDS

Lina Cruz' *Devenir Bleu* at Tangente

by Tamar Tembeck

A high energy thrill and the desire to be personally absorbed into an extreme close-up is what you'll feel when watching Lina Cruz perform. In her five solos, this dancer-chameleon leaps from characters as diverse as a warrior-angel to a lunatic clown with equal engagement and intensity. And her intricate body work, framed in hyper-real costumes and design, invites amazement for both its aesthetic and gymnastic precision.

Born in Columbia and trained in Spain and in U.S.A., Cruz has been a Montrealer for seven years. Although she has since then worked with various companies including Carbone 14 and Marie Chouinard, it is as an independent artist that she has preferred to establish herself.

As the solo performer, choreographer and designer for *Devenir Bleu*, her up-coming suite at Tangente, Cruz has almost single-handedly managed to craft an environment for her stories. With the help of musicians Jimmy Tanaka and Philippe Noireaut, she has set the stage for five characters, in five solos, and in the key of the surreal.

Cruz's five archetypal personae make reference to individuals living on the edges of consciousness. A nun, an angel, a lunatic, a body emerging from a cocoon and even a human bordering on death. Cruz likens each of these threshold figures to that of the artist's developing

voice, Cruz's characters are embarked on pivotal journeys. While they move towards different planes of existence (death, madness, religious revelation),

the emerging artist advances to a greater knowledge of self. In both cases, fundamental shifts of awareness come into play.

At once fascinated and scared by these transitions, Cruz confronts her development as an artist through allegory. The hesitance she might have felt in facing these situations is reflected in the way she presents them to audience. Instead of presenting them bleakly, she envelops them in an appealing aesthetic, with resonant iconography.

Monk's Dream, exposes a nun's fantasies in the lingering moments before she falls asleep. A physical dialogue with a mysterious vial traces her waking-dreams, until its sleep opiates are released. *Virtual Reality*'s exploration of madness can be likened to the artist's retreat into

ity. Along with *The Guardian*, *Skin Walker*, and *Devenir Bleu*, Cruz's showcase presents the confrontation of threshold states with emotional acuity.

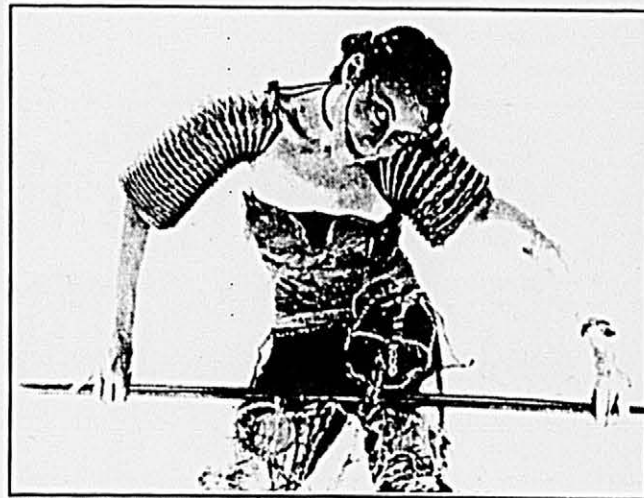


PHOTO BY LAURENT BOUTERAON

No need to feel like running away at the thought of all these heavy subjects. Cruz is the first to admit she couldn't approach them without humour. So she lets her curiosity for the "other side" kick through and allows for a potentially heavy burden to be lifted off hers and the audience's shoulders. The result is an engulfing spectacle that quite simply dazzles.

Cruz's gestural language is probably the main source of the bedazzling. Her strong ballet background is swallowed into a very real theatrical sensibility. Her strength and flexibility are tested in balancing acts worthy of the Cirque du Soleil. And her choreographs involve successive patterns of briefly frozen images with rapid intricate isolations. It is Cruz's body who acts the parts, and upon seeing it you'll marvel at how much more it communicates than words.

Having taken on the roles of these tragic clowns and these ecstatic figures, Cruz transmits her experience as an artist, through these parables, in a highly personalized and candid way. And she does so with an immediacy of communication all too seldom seen in contemporary dance.

Lina Cruz performs *Devenir Bleu* at Tangente Sept. 19 to 22. Info and reservations at 525 1500.

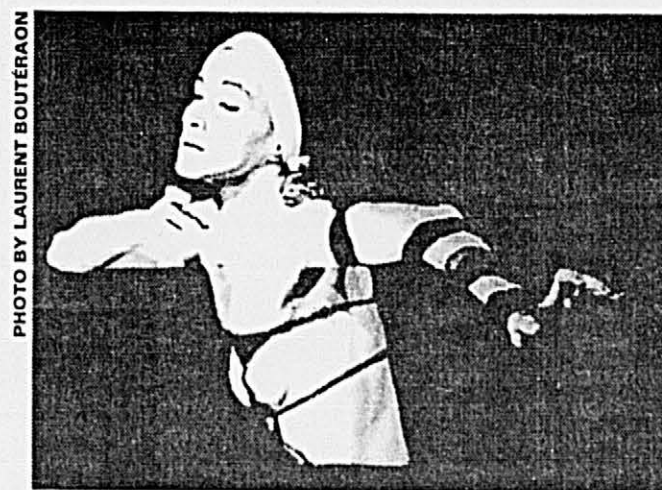


PHOTO BY LAURENT BOUTERAON

self.

Just like the artist is said to "travel" in order to find his/her

an interior world. Alienated from the "normal" outside, he creates his own colourful real-

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Download -

*The eyes of Stanley
Pain and Sidewinder*
ep

(Subconscious communications / Netzwerk)

As it becomes more and more apparent that music in the '90s is being designed to set an atmosphere, we see a definite trend towards re-working musical clichés that have become associated with a particular clique. Thus, we have the lugubriously garbed super-goth, kissing cousin to the modern industrial rivet-head, the primary distinction between them being their attachment to a particular aural environment. Download straddles this fine and somewhat illusionary border, with a distinct tendency to wander into the realm of the danceable industrial track — minus the ubiquitous heavy metal guitar sample.

It seems it must be mentioned that this band shares a label and two band mates of what was Skinny Puppy. The similarities can be found to this early band, but Download should not be restricted to the label of 'side-project'. In some ways, these two albums (original and remix were released without a significant time lapse) represent an evolution of the original intent and technique of Skinny Puppy. And yet the introspective mood — both in lyrical content and in music — of this album is far less self-pitying and more calmly contemplative (perhaps due to the strong presence of guest artist Genesis P. Orridge, formerly of Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV).

Which, to some extent, brings me back to the illusionary border. Download appears to be approaching these two emerging genres with a refreshing disregard to established aural environment clichés. The strong existential angst, the cornerstone of both 'industrial' and 'goth', that is heard on this album is probably the main fac-

tor propelling my feeling that these albums reflect a synthesis of these moods. A contemplative deconstruction of pain, fear or death, using some tools crafted and sharpened by the '80s and some more recently (re)discovered (e.g. dub/ambient). How's that for a press release description, there, Mr. PR guy?

— Jay McCoy

Pest -

Interabang (!?)

(Derivative)

The burgeoning rock critic would have you believe that the current avant-garde is something called "post-rock." Encompassing bands as disparate as US Maple, Stereolab, Tortoise and Flying Saucer Attack, the term supposedly describes a tendency towards atmosphere rather than melody in music. The real common ground, as far as I can tell, is a renewed interest in using electronic instruments and/or effects pedals, and a willingness to go beyond the five minute threshold.

Once a cute pop band in the vein of Beat Happening and Heavenly, Pest 5000 have been enduringly evolving into something more. That something more, some may argue, is not that far from 'post-rock'. Pest 5000's trademark — Geneviève's violin — is still kicking about, but the band is experimenting with other instruments and ideas. The first track, "Mattering," begins with a programmed cha-cha-cha drumbeat, while "Smokes" sees Pest 5000 venturing into 10 minute territory without the result sounding unwarranted.

Though the inclusion of marimba, vibes and some moog might lead one to believe otherwise, *Interabang* actually shows Pest 5000 developing a harder edge. Songs like "Too Skinny" and a reworked version of "Pregnant Pause" (the original appeared on a Derivative double 7") reveal more variety in dynamics and, surprisingly, melodic structure. Like Stereolab, Pest 5000 complement their experimentation with a keen appreciation of traditional pop aes-

thetics.

So if post-rock is going to be like this — as opposed to gratuitous, long-winded progressive rock — then long live the revolution.

— Kevin Siu

Bandit Queen -

Hormone Hotel

(Mammoth)

When I first saw the name Bandit Queen, I thought, cool, a soundtrack from the Shekhar Kapur film of the same name. Instead I got an earful of overcooked indie rock.

Bandit Queen was originally Swirl, a five piece out of Manchester, that has been wittled down to three members: Tracy Godding on vocals/guitar, Janet Wolstenholme on bass and David Eric Goffrey on drums. After listening to *Hormone Hotel*, their debut album, all I can recommend is that they keep their day jobs. The possible merit of a few songs is obscured by the mediocrity of the project as a whole — Godding's voice is grating (especially on tracks like "Nailbiter") and the riffs sound like a million others heard before.

The worst part is that I thought that this album was in some way related to the film about Phoolan Devi, a low caste woman in India who was raped, beaten and humiliated. She eventually became one of the most feared and famed outlaws in India, robbing the high castes and giving to the lower castes. She turned herself in after a massacre at Behmai in February 1983 surrounded by an adoring, chanting crowd.

It turns out that the band Bandit Queen chose that name when the film was released because of the amount of media attention surrounding the movie. They've never even watched the movie. Frankly, it disturbs me that they had the gall to steal the name. Nothing in the album is remotely related, nor does it come close to having the same cultural significance. Godding said in an interview that "the next album will be even better. If you can get any better."

Sure.

— Derek Fung



FANTASTIC FANT-ASIA

Two gems at the Best of Fant-Asia festival

by Julien Lapointe

Green Snake is a startling moral fable presented this Sunday afternoon at five o'clock as part of the Best of Fant-Asia film festival at the Cinéma Impérial (1430 Bleury, not far from the métro Place-des-Arts). The film, like many of those I saw at the festival, is driven by such emotional integrity that, though a work of popular melodrama at heart, it has been produced with the intelligence and aesthetic virtues of true art.

This film is a medieval tale of two "spirit-snakes" who metamorphosise into humans. It may easily come across as traditional fantasy/suspense hokum, with the central drama concerning a male character falling in love with one of the two women/snakes. But the female protagonists are not really evil and are hardly the malicious femme fatales western audiences have grown accustomed to expecting from such a genre.

The film does not conform to our traditional, culturally-biased prejudices on works of its like. And if *Green Snake* is not wholly innovative — it mostly remains within the limits of its own genre — this is nevertheless a very different brand of

meditating to his sudden awareness of a non-human nearby and an ensuing chase scene. This transition, from apparent serenity to the abrupt, nervous editing, adept use of sound effects and rapid camera movements plunges us straight into the movie, even though we've just barely begun the prologue. Hark masters his art so well, both in terms of technique and emotionalism, that he imparts a graceful fluidity to this essentially melodramatic cinematic play.

The two non-humans escape Fa-hai to become the two women/spirit-snakes of a surprisingly slow-paced love story, with larger (though not entirely profound) implications concerning the themes of love and tolerance. This in turn evokes the concern of the danger of spiritual devotion and/or intellectual rigour when used as means of oppression or escape from the more sensual pleasures of life.

In the film, Sou-ching, one of the snakes, seduces Hsui-Xien, a young scholar whose mind has already been indoctrinated by more academically sound aspirations. Sou-ching, like her

and the latter's more sentiment driven nature.

In keeping with the allegory central to the film's fantasy genre, *Green Snake* does not detach itself from this polarized man/intellectual-woman/emotional view of life, but it does reveal a more sensitive mode of thinking as to its view of this gender-stereotyping situation. While Hsui-Xien's pedagogical advisers and especially Fa-hai hold that the serpent-women represent the real danger in his life, it is in fact their misogynist neurosis that are undermining Hsui-Xien's well-being. Their rejection of love and fear of emotion represents an accumulation of age-old prejudices rather than profound commitment to moral principles. Essentially, their ideas are cleverly inverted as the film explores the necessity of acknowledging the human need for love.

Sou-Ching is the true heroine of the story. Her quest to become human is fully realized, although she is nevertheless destroyed by Fa-hai. However, it is she who triumphs over the intolerance of Fa-hai, as well as that of Hsui-Xien's masters. Granted, her yearning for male love (and likewise Hsui-Xien's yearning for female love), presented as a prerequisite for her achieving a human state, is heterosexist. But on the other hand, what I think comes out more clearly in *Green Snake* is a deeply expressed humanitarian embrace of love and life itself, and more precisely the importance of coming to terms with our emotions, and not a narrow-minded 'morality' that implies that women require male love to consider themselves or be considered as 'human' (or vice versa).

Sou-Ching's final perishing is so strong in its bitterness against the destructive conduct of Fa-hai, as well as that of the other 'intellectual' men in this film, that the sudden cathartic appeal of this otherwise simple-minded morality tale transcends its schematism — often the presentation of the themes are not always done with great subtlety nor profundity and the characters, especially the foolishly introverted Hsui-Xien, are not completely exempt from caricature. *Green Snake*, up until this point a fascinating yet uncomplex work, finally reaches a greater degree of passion. Hark's beautifully sustained vision comes through with full power and the result is truly moving.

If you're looking for some-



thing not quite as emotionally overpowering as *Green Snake* (and the film really does captivate the senses), you might want to drop by two hours earlier, at 3 pm, to catch *From Beijing With Love*. If the title rings a bell for any James Bond fans (i.e. the 1964 Bond classic *From Russia With Love*), it's no coincidence: *From Beijing With Love* is a, outrageous take-off on our famed secret agent 007. Such subject matter is somewhat of an easy target — the Bond films were already parodying themselves long before anyone decided to crack jokes at their macho silliness and unbelievable spy-movie conceits.

This film is a classic slapstick routine, nothing more. But with excellent timing, unpredictable gags and a few harrowing episodes — such as when the protagonist, a dumb spy named

Ling Ling-chai, stares naively down the barrel of a gun that's about to blow him away — the film is really funny. You know how well a comedy is working when it pulls the same gag twice and you still find yourself laughing the second time. What makes this picture work is its sheer silliness.

I would have preferred, however, if, through all its excess, the film at least succeeded in achieving a feeling of lyrical surrealism, or if some greater satirical intent had emerged from the work. Instead, the film contents itself with a somewhat childish humour. Yet I enjoyed this eccentric farce. This is wonderful entertainment and, as with *Green Snake*, it restores our faith in the art of popular cinema, one which is far too often betrayed by the commercial fraudulence of Hollywood.



film-making.

What makes *Green Snake* so successful is its unexpectedly delicate tone, coupled with a passionate thematic structure. The director, Tsui Hark, demonstrates the uncommon skill of engaging audiences in the plot quickly and efficiently.

The first images introduce Fa-hai, a powerful Buddhist monk who is engaged in the quest of imprisoning all "non-humans" — animals possessing magic powers who have the ability to transform themselves into humans. His intention is to purify the earth.

There is a sudden shift in rhythm in this early sequence, from a moment where Fa-hai is

sister Green, seeks human companionship; the two women want to become human, an admittedly more appealing existence than that of remaining snakes.

The women are obviously sexually appealing and use this sexuality to seduce the men they desire (in a humorous episode, Green pursues the monk Fa-hai and actually succeeds, much to his ascetic frustration, in giving him an erection). They are characterised by their sexuality and emotions, in stark contrast to the men who are thoroughly cerebral, as if to suggest the profound difference between men and women, in terms of the former's supposed rationality

events

Thursday, Sept. 12

- McGill Figure Skating Team's first meeting, 19h in the Currie gym. New members welcome. Info: Kristi, 982-9170.
- Parachuting information session, 12h. Info: Francis McKee, 398-4106.
- QPIRG's Network for Youth in Community Economics (NYCE) orientation meeting, Shatner Cafeteria at 18h.

Friday, Sept. 13

- The Société psychanalytique de Montréal presents, "Mort, Douleur et Souffrance: Penser le mal?" 19h-22h, Hôpital Notre Dame, Amphitheatre Rousselot. Cost: students, \$10.
- SALSA's Carnival Latino '96 on McGill's lower campus all day. Admission is free. Info: 398-6658.

• LBGTGM's "Welcome Back Wine & Cheese," 19h at UTC (3521 University, corner of Milton). All queer-frie idly people welcome.

Sunday, Sept. 15

• McGill Varsity Baseball Team double-batter against Carleton University's Gee-Gees, 12h and 16h.

Beyond and ongoing

- YWCA (1355 René-Lévesque W.) presents "Saving Your Dollars with Sense: Financial Fitness Advanced." Classes run Sept. 18-Oct. 9, Wednesdays, 18h-18h30. Info: 866-9941.
- McGill School of Social Work offers free bereavement support and self-help groups. Info: Estelle Hopmeyer, 398-7067.

THE FOUR DIMENSIONAL ROCK BAND

NYC's Versus graduate to the
next level

Interview by Jonah Brucker-Cohen

Versus are a band from New York City. They consist of singer/guitarist Richard Baluyut, bassist/vocalist Fontaine Touns, drummer Edward Baluyut, and guitarist James Baluyut. After the breakup of their previous bands, Flower and Saturnine, the Baluyut brothers moved from Michigan to NYC where they met Texan-native Touns, and formed Versus in 1991. On Tuesday night, Versus played an impressive set of scathing pop hits from their newest record *Secret Swingers* (Caroline), as well as some classics from their last LP, *The Stars are Insane* (Teenbeat). Before the show, I spoke with Richard and Fontaine about the joys of rockstardom and the musical direction they have pursued over the past five years.

Daily: Musically, where has Versus gone from your first 7" on Landspeed (a small label based in North Carolina) to the new album?

Richard: Our first seven inch was when we were a really young band, we were just trying to make tons of noise. Now, we pick and choose more, we have more self control, more restraint, and still try to make beautiful music- but it's got to be different now than it was then, I hope.

Has the transition from labels (Teenbeat-Caroline) been a long time coming or was it a spur of the moment decision?

Fontaine: [Caroline] had asked us to put a record out but we really weren't interested [at first], and then it was a spur of the moment decision that we made.

R: The transition from Teenbeat to Caroline actually took a while, but Mark [Owner of Teenbeat records and member of such notorious bands as Unrest, Air Miami, and Olympic Death Squad] wanted us to be on a bigger label such as 4AD or a label Caroline's size because he thought it would be better for us.

Has shifting drummers facilitated and advanced your songwriting or burdened it by having to teach the songs again over and over?

R: Our drummer for the last three or four years [another brother, Ed Baluyut] left recently and that was difficult because that was when we had really formed our sound together. Whereas the first drummer was more like launching [the band], but I never felt like we were good until Ed was in the band so it's been rough since he left.

F: We reached our peak when Ed quit, so it's actually been re-

ally difficult.

R: Now our new drummer is working out and we got him around the same time as we added a second guitarist, so there's going to be some growing pains...

Do you see "Secret Swingers" as a departure from the past format of Versus with the addition of a second guitarist, the overall songwriting approach, and the la-

bel switch?

R: I see it as a departure mostly lyrically about trying to be more direct in what we were saying this time.

F: I see it as an evolution rather than a departure. My lyrics have always been really personal. I just think we have gone to the next level, I don't really think we've left anything behind, it's just evolving to a greater form. There's more shared vocals on this record.

What are the lyrics about on the new record and what does the "Secret" represent?

R: Basically it's about a "one on one" relationship, talking to each other instead of beating around the bush. It's very direct and personal, at least for us. The secret is about having double lives, one life is what you want people to see and the other life is what you don't want people to see.

F (to Richard): So are you saying you have a secret life?

R: I'm Zorro.

F: So that makes you wonder

what kind of lives we lead.

What were the major differences between the two records?



R: Mostly, the biggest difference is that we took a month and a half for this one whereas we took a weekend to record *The Stars are Insane*. [Recording in such a short time] is good for certain times, but you want to be able to not only create when you're writing songs but also when you are recording. The

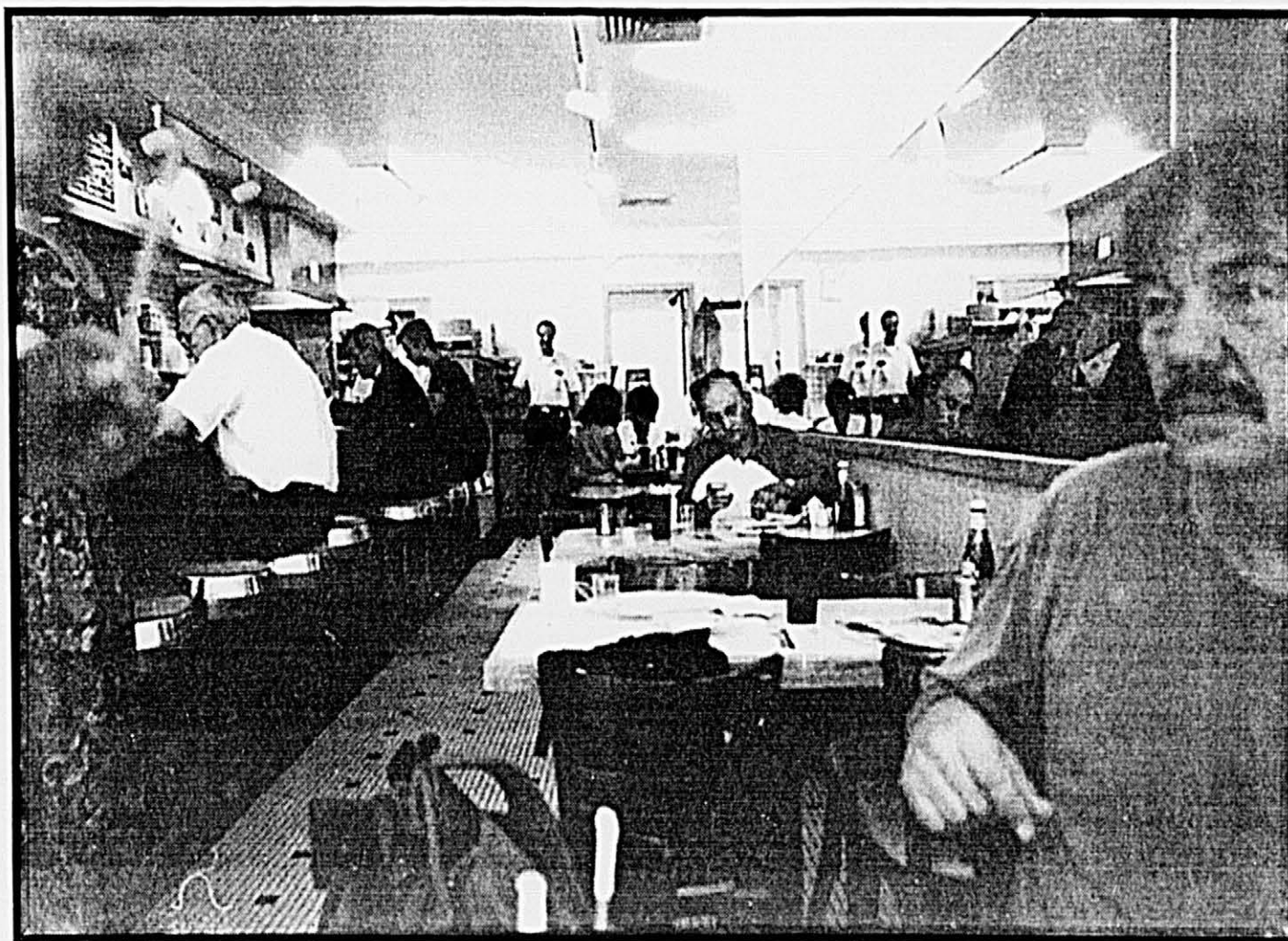
time you spend normally in practice thinking of songs, instead you're doing it while you're recording which really marries the writing and recording processes. As far as that translates to sound, it has a more organic sound, it sounds more natural because we felt more natural doing it.

How has a second guitar added to the music?

R: It adds a new dimension to the music of Versus. The Fourth-Dimension!!!

Today, Versus leave for Europe on a short tour supporting Secret Swingers.. They currently have a track on a Canadian compilation on Squirtgun records and recently recorded a split 7" with Olympia, WA's Unwound — where both bands cover Flower songs. Throughout their existence, Versus have continued to remain as focused as they are prolific and create some of the finest pop gems that continue to propel them into indie rock's coveted fourth dimension... (Twilight Zone theme please)

off the darkroom floor...



by Lucy Atkinson

daily classifieds

Ads may be placed through the Daily Business Office, Room B-07, University Centre, 9h00-14h00. Deadline is 14h00, two working days prior to publication. McGill Students & Staff (with valid ID): \$4.60 per day, 3 or more consecutive days, \$4.05 per day. General Public: \$5.75 per day, or \$4.90 per day for 3 or more consecutive days. Extra charges may apply, prices include applicable GST (7%) or PST (6.5%). Full payment should accompany your advertising order and may be made in cash or by personal cheque (for amounts over \$20 only). For more information, please visit our office or call 398-6790. **WE CANNOT TAKE CLASSIFIED ADS OVER THE PHONE. PLEASE CHECK YOUR AD CAREFULLY WHEN IT APPEARS IN THE PAPER.** The Daily assumes no financial responsibility for errors, or damages due to errors. Ad will re-appear free of charge upon request if information is incorrect due to our error. The Daily reserves the right not to print any classified ad.

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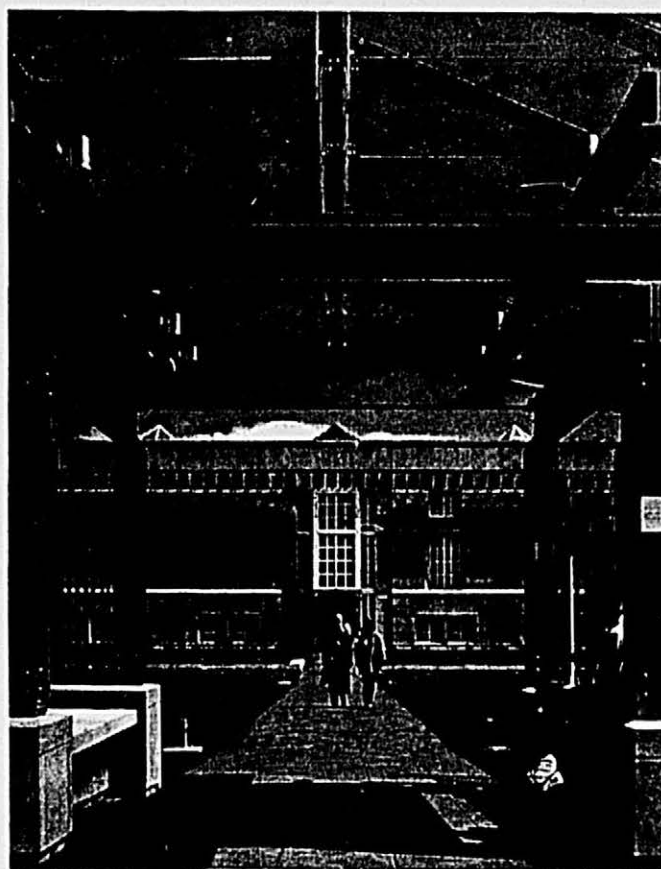
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THE POST GRADUATE STUDENT'S SOCIETY (PGSS)

BY-ELECTION

Call for nominations for the position of
Vice President – Internal Affairs

All members of the Post Graduate Student's Society are eligible for nominations. Nomination forms and instructions for candidates can be obtained at the PGSS office at Thomson House (4th floor, 3650 McTavish Street). Nomination forms must be completed and returned to the Chief Returning Officer at the PGSS office by **Tuesday, September 17th at 5pm.**

Please note that this position is rewarded a yearly stipend of \$6,000.

For further information, contact Christie Stephenson, the Chief Returning Officer at 398-3756.

ELECTION DATES

Nomination submission
deadline:

Tues. Sept. 17th '96 (5pm).

Campaign Period:

Wed. Sept. 18th '96 – Tues. Sept. 24th '96 (midnight).

Meet the Candidates / Hustings:

Thurs. Sept. 19th '96 (5pm)
at MacDonald Campus, Faculty Lounge,
and Fri. Sept. 20 '96 (5pm) at Thomson House.

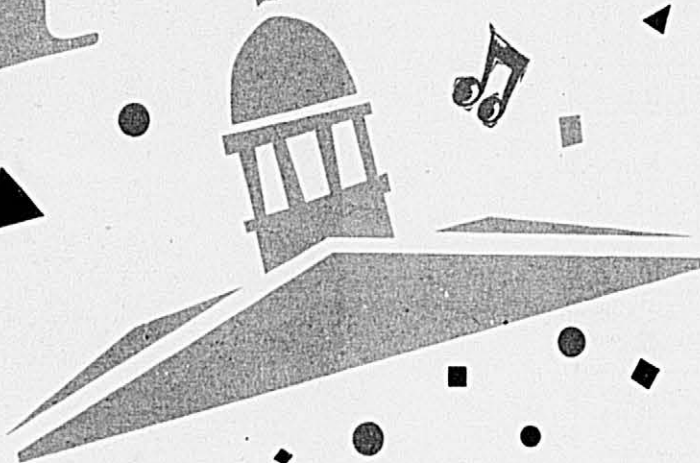
Ballots and ballot boxes will be available only on
Wednesday, September 25th at Thomson House and MacDonald Campus.
Look for posters for poll locations and times or call 398-3756.

Christie Stephenson,
Chief Returning Officer



FREE ADMISSION BRING YOUR FRIENDS

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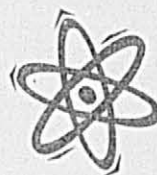
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DISPLAYS



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